

FNC ponders early retirement for Emirati women

Recommendations suggest allowing them to retire after 15 years of service and extending six months maternity leave

- By Samir Salama, Associate Editor
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Abu Dhabi: Early retirement after just 15 years in office and longer maternity leave for women in the federal government are among a host of recommendations to be submitted by the Federal National Council (FNC) to the Cabinet for approval.

Once approved, the proposals by an ad hoc committee of the House would change laws to enable Emirati women to retire after 15 years of service and scrap the minimum retirement age of 50 for women. Under the current law, women can retire only after 20 years in office.

Representatives of the Chamber also suggested that maternity leave be increased to boost women's empowerment and productivity.

Dr Sultan Al Moadhen, head of the health, labour and social affairs committee, said the recommendations were based on the feedback the committee got from working women in various departments.

"Working women complained of mental and physical exhaustion because they spend inadequate time with their families and said they felt distant from their children as they grow up," Dr Al Moadhen said. He added the committee also sought advice from human resources specialists, academia and representatives from the agency in charge of human resources in the government (Tanmia).

Dr Amal Al Qubaisi, a member from Abu Dhabi demanded that women working in the government sector be given six months' maternity leave — two months paid leave for delivery, two months half-paid leave for maternity and another two months without pay.

Job sharing: part-time employment

The FNC also proposed conducting feasibility study of job sharing — an employment arrangement where typically two people are retained on a part-time or reduced-time basis to perform a job normally filled by one person working full-time. An ad hoc committee of the FNC said the system was proved successful in many countries including Australia. Many women, and men, are faced with the choice of continuing their careers or raising a

family. Job sharing provides the opportunity to do both. The House also suggested establishing an administrative court to look into lawsuits related to public jobs.

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